

1 Envisioning Madison Township

1.1 Vision statement

Madison Township seeks to balance the preservation of its semi-rural character with the accommodation of new growth and development to create a desirable community with a positive and unique character and enhance the quality of life for residents. Through this comprehensive plan Madison Township will implement land use policies that protect and enhance its natural resources, promote and preserve viable agriculture and viniculture, support sustainable economic development, mandate high aesthetic standards and high quality appearance of public spaces, and ensure new development is carefully integrated into the semi-rural and agrarian landscape.

1.2 Why a comprehensive plan?

A comprehensive plan is a land use document that provides the framework and policy direction for land use decisions and other actions affecting the physical, economic, and social aspects of the community. It indicates in a general way how local government leaders want the community to develop in the future.

The basic characteristics of a comprehensive plan are that it is general and far-reaching. Another defining characteristic is that the plan is long-range and provides a base from which to make decisions.

The adoption of a comprehensive plan often becomes the driving force behind creation of a more targeted plan. Examples of more targeted plans would include the US 20 Corridor Plan, or a plan for redevelopment of the North Madison area.

The Madison Township Comprehensive Plan is a major planning effort to guide the community toward what it will be like in future as a place to live, work, and invest. It is being developed through an open, participatory process driven by four broad-reaching questions:

1. Where are we now?
2. Where are we going?
3. Where do we want to be?
4. How do we get there?

The Comprehensive Plan will identify a vision and broadly address the elements that build a community including transportation, housing, open space and natural resources, sense of place, government services, the impacts of new developments and more.

The Comprehensive Plan serves as the township “to do” list, at least with regards to land use and the built environment for the near future. Through goal setting, it will set priorities about land use, economic development, cultural and natural resources, transportation and other areas.

The Comprehensive Plan will not propose specific lot-by-lot locations for land uses or facilities, or address detailed regulations. A Comprehensive Plan is not a zoning resolution or subdivision regulation. However, such regulations are used as tools for implementing the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is intended to provide the legal and rational framework for regulations, investments, and government action.

1.3 Comprehensive planning process

Urban planners have used some form of the planning process since the inception of the planning profession. Long ago, Patrick Geddes advocated a three-step procedure: survey, analysis, plan.

Today, most planners use a planning process called the rational model. The rational model usually takes the following form:

1. Identify issues and options.
2. State goals and objectives; identify priorities.
3. Collect and interpret data.
4. Prepare plans.
5. Draft programs for plan implementation.
6. Evaluate potential impacts of plans and implementing programs, and modify the plans accordingly.
7. Review and adopt plans.
8. Review and adopt implementation programs.
9. Administer plan-implementing programs, monitor their impacts, and amend plans in response to feedback.

A very important part of the planning process is public participation; that those who live, work and own businesses and nurseries in the township have a role in charting its future. Meetings were held with residents and community leaders throughout 2005-2008, to solicit thoughts about the state of the built environment in the township, and the direction in which it should be heading.

The planning process is not finished with the completion of the steps described above. Collecting and analyzing information and implementing comprehensive plans is an ongoing process. Policy statements require occasional revision to respond to new conditions; long-range goals need periodic review. The planning process is a continuous program for keeping the plans of a community current and relevant, and the implementation programs fair and effective. It is important to review plans on a regular basis, and keep them up to date. Good planning practice recommends major review and revision of a comprehensive plan every five to seven years.

The Comprehensive Plan is a flexible planning tool that is not carved in stone. While the plan presents goals and policies to be pursued, future events, broad changes in community values, or the availability of financing could cause township leaders and residents to focus on other goals. However, it is good civic stewardship to ensure that revisions conform to the spirit of the plan and sound planning principles, and consider the best interest of the community as a whole.

1.4 Plan organization

Each element contains at least two parts: a narrative description of current conditions (often called an inventory) and possible courses of action for the township; and formal goals and policies. To permit flexibility in implementing the plan, specific implementation steps are usually not included with individual goals and policies.

The formal plan introduction, in the next chapter, describes the history, geography and geology of Madison Township, along with a description of the challenges faced by the township. The **demographics element** describes attributes of the township population, how it

has changed through the years, and how it may change in the future. The **land use element** describes the role of the built environment on the township, how land is being used, and the importance of creating and maintaining a unique sense of place. **The transportation element** describes the transportation system in the township; not just considering motor vehicles, but also bicycles and pedestrians. The **housing element** describes home ownership and tenure trends, and addresses challenges such as affordable housing. The **public facilities element** describes all public land uses – public safety facilities, schools, parks and open space – and discusses future needs. The **utilities element** describes the role that utilities play in shaping the built environment of the township. The **economic development element** describes the business environment of the township, and policies intended to maintain a diverse tax base and reduce the tax burden on residents, while preserving rural character. The **natural resources element** describes the features of the township built, not by man but by nature, and ways to protect those gifts in the face of population growth.

The appendix will include specific survey results, and suggested implementation policies, including zoning resolution and map amendments.

1.5 Relation to adopted regional plans

The Madison Township Comprehensive Plan is considered an amendment to the Lake County Comprehensive Plan. Regional plans from the Northeast Ohio Area Coordinating Agency (NOACA), the regional council of governments (COG) that guides transportation planning in the Cleveland metropolitan area, are also reflected in this plan.

The township comprehensive plan committee met in conjunction with the planning commission for Madison Village, which served as the village comprehensive plan committee. Although the village plan will be a separate document from the township plan, the two will be interwoven, acknowledging the interdependence of the township and village, and recognizing that land use issues in one community may have a significant impact on the other.